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ABSTRACT

This final report describes activities and accomplishments of Project STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools), a 3-year outreach project designed to provide training and technical assistance (TA) related to the development of statewide transition systems for children with disabilities, birth through 5 years of age, and their families. The project focused on development of state policies, statewide training and TA networks, and model local sites that established community-wide interagency systems for transition using the STEPS model. Project STEPS facilitated the development of a statewide transition system in Kentucky which includes state level policies and procedures, a statewide training and TA network involving three state-level agencies, and 16 local communities that have replicated the STEPS model through interagency councils. The project has positively impacted over 3,000 families of young children with disabilities through training efforts at the community level. In addition, over 600 direct service providers have been trained to prepare young children for transition to the next environment. Similar activities are being conducted in Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and Delaware. The project also developed materials on four components of transition: administrative systems, staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation. The report details progress on each of its three main goals and associated objectives and its impact. It concludes that the Project has met or exceeded all of the goals and objectives proposed. (DB)

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ED 393 267

PROJECT STEPS:

Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools

National Outreach Project

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Annual Evaluation and Final Report

1994 - 1995

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1994 - 1995 Project STEPS Annual Evaluation and Final Report

Abstract

Project STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools) was an outreach project designed to provide training and technical assistance (TA) related to the development of statewide transition systems for children with disabilities birth through five years of age and their families. The focus of the project was to provide assistance in the development of state policies, a statewide training and TA network, and model local sites that establish community wide interagency systems for transition using the STEPS model and adopted state policies.

Project STEPS has successfully facilitated the development of a statewide transition system in Kentucky which includes the Cabinet of Human Resources (Lead agency, Part H), the Kentucky Department of Education, the Head Start State Collaboration grant, and the Kentucky Head Start Association. As a result of Project STEPS, the statewide system, which serves over 22,000 children and families, includes state level policies and procedures based on the STEPS model as well as federal legal requirements, a statewide training and TA network of trainers from each of the three state level agencies, and 16 local communities that have replicated the STEPS model through interagency councils. The project has positively impacted over 3,000 families of young children with disabilities through training efforts on the implementation of formalized transition procedures at a community level. In addition, over 600 direct service providers have been trained in preparing young children for transition to the next environment.

Throughout the project's existence as a demonstration and outreach project, materials have been developed which aid in the development of state and community transition systems. These materials focus on four components of transition: administrative systems, staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation for the next environment.

By the end of the project, Tennessee will have in place a statewide system for transition through the development of a state plan and policy for early childhood transition, a statewide training and TA system, and four local model sites. Three additional states (Georgia, North Carolina, and Delaware) will have interagency plans for statewide transition system development as a result of Transition Forums and follow-up consultation. Kentucky transition system refinement will occur as a result of annual Transition Forums and follow-up consultation. Finally, a document will be developed which will outline strategies related to transition.

Format of Report

This document is the third year evaluation of the STEPS Outreach Project and serves as a final report for the Project. The evaluation plan follows a model similar to that described by Wolery (1983, 1987) for formative and summative evaluation of service programs. To date, the purposes of the evaluation have been determined and program objectives have been specified. Questions and measurement sources to evaluate each objective also have been identified. This process resulted in three primary goals being established with 17 secondary objectives listed to accomplish these goals. Throughout all project years, data have been collected from each measurement source. This report includes the data, its analysis, and summarization. The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to the project on the completion of their objectives, to provide a summative statement of the project, and to assess the impact of the project.

Each of the three primary goals with their respective objectives are listed. Under each objective, the progress of the Project throughout the three years will be summarized based on data collected throughout all project years. Following the discussion of each goal and objectives, summary statements and/or recommendations are made. The summary statement also contains any changes or logistical problems encountered and how they were resolved. In addition, a separate section on the impact of the project will be included after the progress on the goals and objectives are described and summarized.

Progress of the Project

The following goals and objectives have been accomplished:

GOAL 1: To establish a statewide system for transition in the state of Tennessee for effective procedures from early intervention to preschool programs and from preschool programs to primary programs.

Objective 1.1: Establish a State Transition Team (STT) consisting of representatives from the major service delivery networks in the state for early childhood services. These agencies will include at a minimum the Department of Education, Head Start, Mental Retardation, and Children's Special Services as well as the Interagency Coordinating Council. Measured by: Written agreement documents.

As reported in previous reports, six people have been identified as members of the State Transition Team. One of those members has submitted a formal, written letter of agreement. Members include:

Pat Nichols	Director, Community Services, Department of MH/MR
Judy Womack	Director, Child Health Programs
Sarah Willis	Part H Coordinator, Department of Education
Janet Camp	Director, Day Care, Department of Human Services
Rose Wood	Director, South Central Human Resource Agency
Dr. Lynda Pearl	East Tennessee State University

It should be noted that throughout the project, some of these individuals have been replaced due to attrition. However, all the appropriate agencies continue to be represented.

Objective 1.2: State Transition Team members will have the skills, information, and materials needed to develop a state transition plan. Measured by: Written documentation and evaluation of training.

Objective 1.2.a: Conduct STEPS Model training.

As reported previously, training was conducted on March 22-23, 1993. The agenda indicated that the appropriate information was covered. Participants evaluation of training indicated that all responded favorably to the training. As stated in the training evaluation report, no family member was included in the training. A complete copy of the training evaluation is available from project staff.

Objective 1.2.b and 1.2.c: Develop and revise state transition plan.

As previously reported, a state transition plan was developed and subsequently revised in the state of Tennessee. Revision of the state transition plan is an on-going process based on meetings held throughout the year (e.g., Tennessee State Transition Team Meeting held on 02-17-94, the regional training conducted in May, 1995 and the Annual Transition Forums).

Objective 1.2.d: Provide on-site technical assistance to state transition team.

The Project Director (Rous) met with the state transition team on February 17, 1994 and April 21, 1994 to provide on-site technical assistance. In addition, technical assistance has occurred via phone and mail. During the last project year, Rous met with staff and

provided technical assistance in both February and May of 1995. In February, Rous met with the state transition team and then these members carried out the training with the use of the STEPS module. The evaluation data collected during the May, 1995, Tennessee Transition Training indicate favorable responses from all participants (a copy of these evaluation data can be obtained from the project evaluators).

Objective 1.3: Each local program in the state will have available to it a regional interagency team of Transition Facilitators composed of representation from existing providers of training and technical assistance within the state. Transition facilitators will represent a variety of agencies including the State Department of Education, Head Start, Mental Retardation, and Children's Special Services. Measured by: Letters of agreement.

Twenty-one people were identified from a variety of agencies to serve as transition facilitators. Listed below are the identified facilitators.

Sharon Nelson	South Central Human Resource Agency Preschool Program
Corean Bryson	South Central Human Resource Agency Preschool Program
Betty Kelley	South Central Human Resource Agency Preschool Program
Linda Kelly	South Central Human Resource Agency Preschool Program
John Craven	Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Julie Ferrara	Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Beth Roby	Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Jan Owens	Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Laura Minor	Warren County School System
Teresa McMahon	Tennessee School for the Deaf
Pam Martin	Special Populations Consultant, Tennessee Dept of Education
Karen Wilson	Obion County School System
Joan Kennedy	Tennessee Early Intervention System
Dr. Fredia Wadley	Davidson County Health Department
Brenda Greene, RN	CSS Coordinator
Doris Spain	Middle Tennessee Health Office
Pam Jones	Northwest Tennessee Health Office
Sandra Arrington	
Alexis Burkett	
Sandy Countermind	
Suzanne Moden	

Again, it should be noted that over the course of the three year project, some of these individuals, due to attrition, have changed. However, each local program has available to it a regional interagency team of Transition Facilitators composed of representation from existing providers of training and technical assistance within the state. Transition facilitators represent a variety of agencies including the State Department of Education, Head Start, Mental Retardation, and Children's Special Services.

Objective 1.4: Regional Transition Facilitators will have skills, information, and materials needed to provide appropriate training and technical assistance to local programs in establishing effective transition procedures. Measured by: Written documentation of training and evaluation of training report, letters of transmittal, other documents.

Objective 1.4.a: Conduct STEPS Model training.

As previously reported, training was conducted on March 22-23, 1993. Agenda indicates that the appropriate information was covered. Participants' evaluation of training indicated

that all responded favorably to the training. A complete copy of the training evaluation is available from project staff.

Objective 1.4.b: Orientation to Transition Facilitator.

This occurred during the training cited above on March 22-23, 1993. The agenda indicates the Transition Facilitators received orientation to the Transition Facilitator Packet.

Objective 1.4.c: Provide on-site technical assistance to local programs.

As indicated in the minutes and as evidenced on the evaluations of the Tennessee Site Meeting on 04-21-94, technical assistance has been provided to the four model sites that are located in the state of Tennessee. In addition, data from the Transition Facilitator Survey indicate that on-site technical assistance has occurred with the four model sites (e.g., Weakley, Davidson, Greene, and Bedford Counties). On-site technical assistance has been available to local programs throughout the project. During the final year of the project, none was required since the State Transition Team was trained to provide this technical assistance.

Objective 1.4.d: Provide technical assistance to Transition Facilitators.

Technical assistance to Transition Facilitators is occurring through phone contact and is documented through Project STEPS phone logs. In addition, technical assistance has been provided on-site and is documented in the minutes of each meeting (e.g., Annual Transition Forums, State Site Training, etc.). In addition, as previously stated, the Project Director (Rous) met with the state transition team on February 17, 1994 and April 21, 1994 to provide on-site technical assistance. In addition, technical assistance has occurred via phone and mail. During the last project year, Rous met with staff and provided technical assistance in both February and May of 1995. In February, Rous met with the state transition team and then these members carried out the training and technical assistance with the use of the STEPS module. The evaluation data collected during the May, 1995, Tennessee Transition Training indicate favorable responses from all participants (a copy of these evaluation data can be obtained from the project evaluators).

Objective 1.5: Four model replication sites will be established within the state that have effective transition procedures in place that are based on the STEPS model and policies developed through the State Transition Plan. Measured by: Letters of agreement.

Objective 1.5.a and 1.5.b: Identify and train local sites.

The following counties were identified as model replication sites: Greene, Weakley, Davidson, and Bedford. These locations are geographically distributed throughout the state of Tennessee. Training for personnel from these local sites occurred on April 27-28, 1993 in Nashville. Forty people were trained and participants rated the content of the training very favorable. However, the location and facilities of the training was overall rated unfavorably. A complete copy of the training evaluation is available from project staff.

Objective 1.5.c: Negotiate replication contracts.

Documentation exists which indicates that each local site has developed and negotiated a contract.

Objective 1.5.d: Develop local procedures.

Each site has developed a plan based on the results from the Survey of Current Transition Practices. This plan resulted in the identification of priorities for the development of local procedures.

Objective 1.5.e: Provide local staff on-site training.

Personnel from all four sites received training in Nashville in April, 1993. Training was evaluated very favorably. As previously reported, all sites rated both the content and presentation style of the training very favorably. Copies of each individual training session's evaluation are available from the project evaluators.

Objective 1.5f: Evaluate and revise local procedures.

Local sites evaluated and revised local procedures as evidenced by the agenda, meeting minutes, and evaluation of the April 21, 1994 State Team meeting. A copy of the evaluation report may be obtained from the Project Evaluators. An impact evaluation was conducted during 1994 and, based on the information collected, appropriate revisions occurred. During the third project year, the state of Tennessee changed priorities and pulled back on transition being a priority. Therefore, this reduction in emphasis has effected the on-going revision of local procedures (i.e., local sites have not been as supported or encouraged to continue to refine local procedures). However, during the final portion of the last project year, the state is again making transition a priority and therefore appropriate changes are being made. The project evaluators can be contacted to obtain the local procedures originally established and the changes that occurred during the project.

Objective 1.5g: Technical assistance to local sites.

All sites have had at least 3, and as many as 5, technical assistance contacts as evidenced by entries on the Technical Assistance Contact Forms. Specifically, the following number of contacts have occurred:

Bedford	4
Davidson	3
Greene	4
Weakley	5

Technical assistance has been provided to local sites via telephone and mailings and on an "on-call basis". However, little technical assistance was required during the last project year due to the training of the state transition team. It should be noted that project staff did provide TIPS training to Greene County in June of 1995.

Objective 1.6: Each local program within the state will have available to it within reasonable travel distance and time, a replication site for examination of effective community transition procedures. Measured by: Written documents.

The following counties were identified as model replication sites: Greene, Weakley, Davidson, and Bedford. These locations are geographically distributed throughout the state of Tennessee. Replication contracts for each site have been negotiated.

Objective 1.7: Two hundred eighty children and families will participate in programs operating effective transition procedures during project replication in four sites. Measured by: Family surveys, copies of HELS, and transition goals.

During the process of prioritizing transition activities, teams were instructed to focus on no more than five to six activities. While all sites chose family involvement and child preparation as activities which were important, not all sites ranked them in their five most important activities. Two of the four model sites targeted family involvement (Bedford and Greene), while only one county targeted child preparation (Greene). Bedford County developed a survey that was designed to identify needs related to transition. Greene County identified issues related to family involvement in transition and held a forum for families and professionals on transition. In addition, Greene County conducted a training on the HELS. Therefore, since no sites selected this activity, no data are available.

Objective 1.8: One hundred ten early intervention, preschool, and public school administrative and direct service staff will have the skills, information, and materials needed to implement effective transition procedures. Measured by: Document and evaluate training.

As previously reported, administrators and staff were trained via local forums, conference presentations and STEPS training activities. Data from the PI's monthly reports indicate that more than 110 early intervention administrators and direct service staff have been trained.

Objective 1.9: Plans will be developed by the Regional Transition Facilitators and State Transition Team for continued implementation of the statewide transition network after the completion of the three year outreach project. Measured by: written documentation.

Evidence of the development of a continuation plan is provided in the 1994 Replication State Annual Report as well as the results of the Transition Forum held during that same year. Personnel opted not to do this activity in 1995 (as stated previously) and also did not attend the Transition Forum.

Summary of Progress to Date on Goal 1 and Recommendations:

To date, all STEPS training has been rated favorably by the attending participants. All objectives, with the exception of 1.7a, have been met or exceeded. Based on the progress to date, no recommendations are made:

GOAL 2.0: To host a Transition Forum on an annual basis that will include, at no cost, a four member State Transition Team from Kentucky (former replication site), Tennessee (current replication site), and two additional states. The Transition Forum will be opened to any state that wishes to pay expenses to send a team.

Objective 2.1: Host an Annual Transition Forum. Measured by: Written documents, letters of agreement, agenda/evaluation of training.

A Transition Forum occurred on July 25-26, 1993 in Lexington, KY. Approximately 45 people from approximately 10 states and the District of Columbia attended. Forum evaluation data indicate that the participants rated the forum very favorably. A complete copy of that forum evaluation can be obtained from the Project staff.

During the second project year, the Transition Forum occurred on July 24-25, 1994 in Lexington, KY. Sixty five people from approximately 16 states and territories attended. Forum evaluation data indicate that the participants rated the forum very favorably. A complete copy of the forum evaluation can be obtained from the Project Evaluators.

During the final project year, the National Transition Forum was held in Lexington, KY on July 9-10, 1995. Teams and individuals from 19 states and territories participated. Ten states (i.e., Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Dakota, and Texas) and one territory (i.e., American Samoa) developed state planning summaries. Forum evaluation data indicate that the participants rated the forum very favorably. A complete copy of the forum evaluation can be obtained from the Project Evaluators.

Objective 2.2: Each state transition team will have the skills, information, and materials needed to develop and implement state transition plans. Measured by: Training agenda/evaluation.

Three new replication states participated in the training (Georgia, North Carolina, and Delaware). Four model sites were identified in Georgia, one in Delaware and six in North Carolina. Trainings were conducted in each state. Training evaluation data and the agendas indicate that participants received appropriate training on implementing state transition plans and that the participants rated the training as effective. A complete copy of those training evaluation data and agendas may be obtained from the project staff.

Each site developed and subsequently revised state transition plans. This is evidenced by both training agendas, forum results, and evaluation data.

It should be noted that data indicate that over the three years of the project over 1400 people have been trained in the STEPS model.

Objective 2.3: Each state transition team will have identified opportunities to link with national and regional technical assistance providers representing Chapter 1, NEC*TAS, Head Start RAP, Regional Resource Centers related to early childhood transition. Measured by: Written documentation.

Numerous linkages have occurred between STT and other agencies including MECCN during the first project year. These linkages have continued throughout the second and third project years. In addition, the Annual Transition Forum allowed for numerous opportunities to network with regional and national technical assistance providers (e.g., NEC*TAS)..

Objective 2.4: Forum participants will have available follow-up assistance via quarterly conference calls for exchange, materials update, and additional technical assistance on a limited on-site basis. Measured by: Written documentation.

Follow-up assistance to all participating states has occurred in numerous ways including conference calls, memoranda, and regional meetings. Documentation of the follow-up activities is in the form of meeting agenda, minutes from meetings and conference calls, and Project STEPS technical assistance logs. Specifically, Kentucky has added approximately 48 counties through technical assistance, Georgia was provided technical assistance in September and November, 1995; North Carolina in November, 1995; and Delaware received new site training in June, 1995. In addition, technical assistance was provided through the Transition Forum.

Summary of Progress to Date on Goal 2 and Recommendations:

Overall, very successful Transition Forums have been planned and implemented. Evaluation data from each forum is available. The data indicate that the majority of participants were highly satisfied with the training and information they received as a result

of attending the forum. In addition, states received training in the STEPS model. To date, all STEPS objectives subsumed under this goal have been met or exceeded. Based on the progress to date, no recommendations are made:

GOAL 3: To develop and disseminate information and products to improve the quality of transition procedures and processes in early childhood including materials and strategies for establishing statewide interagency networks for transition for children and families from early intervention to preschool services and from preschool to primary programs.

Objective 3.1: A manual on strategies for statewide transition system development will be available containing information on strategies for addressing key issues identified on a national level. Measured by: Written documentation.

Objective 3.1a and b: Design and conduct a survey to determine issues for the manual and develop materials and the manual.

The book, "Meeting the challenge: Transition resources for parents of young children with special developmental needs" was developed to address this objectives. It was designed based on information obtained through a needs assessment that was sent to states and local sites. The 46-page book contains over 50 resources for families. A copy of the manual can be obtained from project staff.

Objective 3.1 c and d: Evaluate and revise manual.

To date, based on feedback received from the above-mentioned book, no revisions have occurred. Project staff will continue to collect feedback regarding the book, and when appropriate, make revisions based on that feedback.

Objective 3.2: A report on the Transition Forum will be available on an annual basis to describe Forum proceedings, and updates and critical components of replication site state transition plans and activities.

The 1993 forum report was completed and contained information on the forum agenda, state planning summaries from participating states, notes from breakout sessions that were held during the conference, and a copy of the forum evaluation results.

Both the 1994 and 1995 Transition Forum resulted in the same type of bound report containing the same type of information.

Objective 3.3: Early Intervention, Preschool and Primary programs in replication states will have information and materials on the STEPS model as a result of dissemination activities.

Objective 3.3a: Six articles will be published in state newsletters.

Over six articles containing information on Project STEPS has appeared in state newsletters in Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina. In addition, articles have appeared in the RAP Region IV newsletter and in the Magnolia Circle Outreach Project newsletter, both of which are distributed across the nation.

Objective 3.3b: Three presentations will be made annually at statewide conferences.

Throughout the project, the following presentations, *among others*, have occurred:

"Strategies for building effective councils", Preschool Interagency Council Leadership Training, Louisville, Kentucky, October, 1993.

"Critical issues in transition planning for early childhood programs", the North Carolina DEC Annual Conference, Greensboro, NC, October, 1993.

"On the move: Transition planning for young children and their families", Second Annual Collaborative Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and their Families, Nashville, TN, February, 1994.

"I'm a member of the team: Now, what does that mean?", The Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Convention: World Class Education, Lexington, KY, March, 1994.

"Transition through family involvement", RTC Early Childhood Conference, Louisville, KY, June, 1994.

"Holding effective team meetings", the Second Annual Infant Toddler Conference, Erlanger, KY, August, 1994.

"Assessing social, behavioral, and functional skills", Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Louisville, KY, 1995.

"Navigating the system", New Jersey, April and May, 1995.

"Holding effective team meetings", Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children, Louisville, KY, 1995.

"Promoting Positive Transitions into Kindergarten and First Grade Classrooms", Early Childhood Dinner Meeting, Dover, Delaware, September, 1994.

"Interagency and community knowledge", University of North Carolina, Bits and Pieces Institute, July, 1994.

"Holding effective meetings", International Division for Early Childhood Conference, Orlando, Florida, November, 1995.

Objective 3.3c: Disseminate project information to the four state agencies.

Data from the forum proceedings and other sources indicate that replication states, as well as other states, received Project STEPS materials and information.

Objective 3.3 d, e and f: Project STEPS information will be disseminated to school districts, early intervention programs and Head Start programs in participating states.

The project has met this objective as evidenced by training agendas from replication sites which indicate that materials are being disseminated.

Objective 3.3g: Disseminate nine Project STEPS newsletters.

Six newsletters have been disseminated. Due to financial constraints the remainder of the newsletters were not developed or disseminated. However, a national survey occurred in place of the newsletters.

Objective 3.3h: Information and products will be disseminated upon request.

Through the end of the second project year, over 34 requests have been received and fulfilled for project materials from 21 states and the District of Columbia. Data from the final year of the project indicate that an additional 129 requests have been made from people and agencies in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and two territories.

Objective 3.4: Early Intervention, Preschool and Primary programs across the nation will have information and materials on the STEPS model.

Objective 3.4a: Three articles published in regional/national newsletters.

Information about Project STEPS has appeared in Early Childhood Report, the Magnolia Circle Outreach Project Newsletter, the Region IV RAP Newsbreak, and the Collaboration Newsbrief published by the Kentucky Head Start Collaboration Project. In addition, information concerning Project STEPS has appeared in a book edited by Wolery and Wilber, titled, "Including children with special needs in early childhood programs". In addition, an article, focusing on STEPS, appeared in the April, 1994 issue of Early Childhood Reports. The following two articles have been completed based on project findings and evaluation data:

Rous, B., Shuster, J.W., & Hemmeter, M.L. (1996). Evaluating the impact of the STEPS Model on the development of community-wide transition systems. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Rous, B., Hemmeter, M.L. & Shuster, J.W. (1994). Sequenced transition to education in the public schools: A system's approach to transition planning. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 14, 374-393.

Objective 3.4b: Two presentations at regional/national conferences.

National presentations, among others, have occurred at the Children with Hearing Impairments - Birth to Five Conference held in Colorado in October, 1993; the National CEC-DEC Conference held in San Diego in December, 1993; the Fifth Annual Southeastern DEC/Head Start Conference held in Lexington, Kentucky in August, 1994; the Zero to Three, National Center for Clinical Infant Programs Conference in Washington, DC in December, 1993; the YAI Conference on Early Childhood in New York City in 1995; the International Division for Early Childhood Conference in Orlando, Florida in November 1995, and, the International Early Childhood Conference in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands in October, 1994.

Objective 3.4c, d, and e: Dissemination of products to national technical assistance offices participating in the Transition Forum and to state education agencies and lead agencies in all states and territories; information and sample product dissemination on request.

Through the second project year, over 34 requests were made for materials from 21 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, 52 requests have been made for project materials (at cost) from agencies in 18 states and the District of Columbia as well as from two countries (besides the US). Data from the final year of the project indicate that an additional 129 requests have been made from people and agencies in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and two territories.

Additional Dissemination Activities: In addition to the presentations and trainings listed above, the following activities occurred:

HELS-R Training, Colonial School District, Delaware, August, 1995
Training of Trainers, Ohio Department of Education, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 1995
Coordinated Kentucky Training of Trainers Conference, Lexington, KY, April 1995
Conducted Leadership Training for Preschool Interagency Coordinating Councils across Kentucky, December 1995
Guest Lecture, EDS 620: Instructional Programming in ECSE, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, April 1995
Inservice Training, Child Development Centers of the Bluegrass, Lexington, KY, November 1994
STEPS Training, New Mexico, November 1995
Facilitated the Restructuring of the Kentucky State Core Team, Frankfort, KY, October and November, 1995
Coordinated Midwest EEPD Projects Meeting, Indiana, September, 1994, 1995

Summary of Progress to Date on Goal 3 and Recommendations

The data clearly indicate that Project STEPS met and exceeded all objectives under this goal. No recommendations are made at this time.

Impact of the Project

The impact of Project STEPS was measured at the end of each project year. Each team that participated in Project STEPS completed a survey of current transition practices at two points in time: prior to participating in Project STEPS activities and one year later. This survey was completed by the team and required all team members to come to consensus on items before indicating that the practice had been implemented. This also meant that prior to post test the team had to come to consensus that a change had occurred and the extent to which that change was affected by participation in Project STEPS. Thus, the change scores and project impact data indicate a very conservative measure of impact. In addition to completing the survey, each team participated in a focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to determine what factors, other than Project STEPS, may have contributed to changes in transition practices over the year they participated in Project STEPS activities.

The impact data that will be reported is based on teams from three states. All teams (n=10) had positive change scores with the exception of one county. This county also indicated at pre-test that they were already implementing 70% of the transition practices listed on the survey. The range for the remaining nine counties at pre-test was zero to seven percent. The status of activities during pre and post-testing can be seen in Figure 1. The extent to which Project STEPS affected changes in the transition practices was rated on a scale from 0 to 3 with 3 being the greatest amount of contribution. Two of the ten counties indicated that all changes were a result of Project STEPS input. The mean contribution score was 3.00 for these counties. Four additional counties indicated that the mean contribution was between 2 and 3. The remaining four counties had mean contribution scores between 1.0 and 1.9.

The impact data suggest that the teams who participated in Project STEPS made significant levels of progress in terms of developing and implementing transition policies and procedures. In addition, the teams indicated that Project STEPS made important

contributions to those practices. When teams with low contribution scores were interviewed during focus groups, they indicated that the most significant impact of Project STEPS was that it brought them all together around the table. However, they felt that once they were together, Project STEPS contributed significantly less to their completion of activities. However, the fact that the Project was responsible for bringing them all to the table significantly impacted their ability to develop and implement transition policies and procedures. Additional data from the focus groups are currently being analyzed. One additional impact of Project STEPS is the establishment of statewide transition coordinators in two of the three states. These coordinators are funded through state moneys and are responsible for coordinating the ongoing development and implementation of transition policies and procedures. These positions were established as a direct result of participation in Project STEPS. The Project STEPS staff worked with state leaders to create the transition coordinator positions.

Summary of Report

Project STEPS has met or exceeded all of the goals and objectives that it proposed to do during the three years of funding. Project STEPS activities have consistently received positive ratings from participants. In addition, the impact data suggest that Project STEPS is having a significant impact on the development and implementation of policies and procedures across the country. The number of activities that Project STEPS staff have been asked to do outside of those activities required in their proposal suggests that the staff are highly respected by their colleagues across the country.

